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16 April 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: [blank]   25X1

Director, Intelligence Community Staff

FROM: [blank]   25X1

Chairman, DCID 1/2 Committee

SUBJECT: Whither DCID 1/2?

1. This memo is submitted as a discussion paper for our 19 April meeting.
The survey recently done for you indicates, inter alia, that:

     - there is a large number of organizations which profess to be
"users" of DCID 1/2 and their range of usage is quite wide;

     - no user expressed fundamental disatisfaction with the DCID 1/2
mechanism as it currently exists and operates;

     - recommendations for change centered principally on level of detail
and complexity, with some respondents wanting less and others more.

2. Users have integrated the DCID 1/2 priority assignment system into
their modus operandi, each interpreting the purpose and significance of that
system to suit. Thus, they are comfortable with the system, since it has been
made congruent with and, therefore, supportive of their preferred ways of
doing business. It also provides a useful channel for seeking greater
visibility for intelligence requirements and targets they consider particularly
important. So long as the ground rules are not changed to make DCID 1/2
priorities guidance more explicit and incumbent upon Community agencies, users
are likely to strongly support both retention of the DCID and its current basic
methodology.

3. Our options from here are, first, to do nothing. There is, after all,
no Community ground swell for change. The administrative work load and
committee meeting schedule generated by current DCID 1/2 practices are not
excessive and will not strain assigned responses in the foreseeable future. A
variant second option would be to retain the current DCID 1/2 approach, but to
effect procedural changes designed to streamline the process. This option need
not be discussed at length here because we are likely to implement such changes
in any event, should they appear worthwhile.

4. There is, at least theoretically, a third option which is to terminate
DCID 1/2 on the grounds that its benefits are not worth the cost and effort
involved or that the purpose for which the 1/2 process was established is no
longer valid. A fourth option would continue 1/2, but with fundamental changes
that would yield greater benefit, perhaps against a redefined objective.
The key questions, of course, are: (1) what do we want DCID 1/2 to do; and (2)
to what extent is it doing it now? The current DCID 1/2 directs establishment
of "comprehensive requirements categories and priorities to serve as basic
substantive guidance for the operation, planning, and programming of the
overall US foreign intelligence effort." The requirements categories and
priorities are to "reflect solely the relative importance of topical
information on foreign countries to the policy formulation, planning, and
operation of the NSC, its members, and other Federal organizations. They are
intended to provide a framework for current operational requirements of the
collection, production, and support functions, as well as for projecting mid-
and longer-range requirements and priorities."

5. In my view, current DCID 1/2 methodology and procedure gives
insufficient operational recognition to the term "relative importance." As a
result, the principal mission of 1/2 has been underemphasized. That mission, I
believe, is the maintenance of a continuous, formal process whereby the
Community and its principal customers jointly identify, on a macro level, the
problems, issues, situations, etc. against which the nation's intelligence
assets are to be deployed over time. Since those assets will never be
sufficient to satisfy all requirements, the primary function of the DCID 1/2
process is to deal with the necessity for prioritization by:

     a. categorizing the various intelligence needs and illuminating the
     issues and considerations pertaining to determination of their relative
     importance;

     b. providing a Community forum wherein contending views of the
     relative importance of particular intelligence needs can be identified,
     debated, and determinations made;

     c. requiring that the necessary prioritization choices be made; and

     d. maintaining an up-to-date register of priorities for use as
     guidance by Community managers and planners and as evidence that we do,
     indeed, have our act together.

6. The foregoing functions, in my opinion, more than justify continuing
DCID 1/2. Its current manifestation, however, performs function c. poorly and,
consequently, does the others less well than might be expected. The DCID 1/2
matrix is, in fact, an aggregation of individually and separately assigned
topical priorities. Relative importance is determined principally by
extrapolation, e.g., Priority 3 topics are relatively more important than
Priority 6 topics, and is not a systemic function of determining the priorities
themselves. In my memo to Committee members of 2 February (copy attached), I
proposed several fundamental changes to current practice designed to make

determination of relative importance a structural function of the priorities assignment process, and to otherwise make the results of that process more useful to Community managers and planners. As indicated therein, I floated the proposals in part to determine the Community's reaction to potential change. The responses I've received parallel the user survey findings: there is little incentive within the Community to change; the members are basically comfortable with the present system. Therefore, if we are going to support a fundamental change in DCID 1/2 procedure, the impetus is going to have to come from the DDCI.
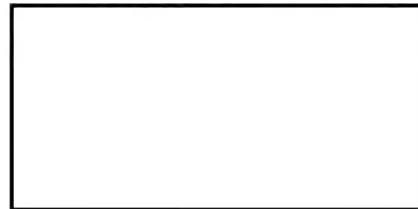
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Attachment:
    Memo to DCID 1/2 Committee
    Members, dated 2 February 82

SUBJECT: Whither DCID 1/2?

Distribution:
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